

INCOMING TELEGRAM

NO: TOPOL 922  
Dec 30, 9 PM  
FROM: WASHINGTON  
TO: PARIS FOR USRO  
VERBATIM TEXT

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Ref: Polto 804

Please convey to Stikker following text of Secretary's reply to Stikker's letter of December 18. Original being pouched. In delivering this letter, emphasize to Stikker importance of holding information re Thompson probe on confidential basis. Re Polto 822 advise Stikker we plan at January 5 NAC meeting to fill in council re Kennedy-MacMillan talks and that Berlin portion this report will be along LHM88 para 4 of Secretary's letter.

FYI for January 5 meeting, we plan authorize you to draw on DepCircTel 1172 as well as other Tels reporting on Kennedy-MacMillan talks. End FYI

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QUOTE:

Dear Mr. Secretary-General:

Thank you for your letter of December 18 in which you gave me your evaluation of the present atmosphere in the NATO Council with regard to the Berlin question.

SECRET

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While this exchange of viewpoints did not result in much forward motion, we were able to work out an arrangement within the alliance under which we will resume exploratory contacts with the USSR. The nature and timing of our approach to the Soviets as well as the instructions to be sent to Ambassador Thompson were discussed by the President with Prime Minister MacMillan last week. In the context of the Paris discussions, it was agreed that Ambassador Thompson should seek an appointment with Gromyko as soon as possible after January 1 to attempt to ascertain whether any basis exists for meaningful negotiations. In his initial approach, Thompson will limit himself primarily to exploring Soviet intentions on access arrangements. He will not raise the other major aspects of the Berlin problem such as the status of West Berlin, the relations between West Berlin and the Federal Republic, or the broader questions of Germany including frontiers and reunification. Since it is intended that Thompson's initial probe will be of an exploratory nature only, and will not include negotiations, it should not be of long duration. However, if on the basis of this probe it is decided that grounds for negotiations exist, a Foreign Ministers' meeting will presumably follow. In any event, we will keep you fully informed regarding the outcome of Thompson's approach and will also ensure that the council is informed.

In closing, let me say that I greatly admired your firm and skillful handling of the Nato Ministerial Meeting under somewhat trying circumstances.

I look forward to seeing you towards the end of January, at which time we can discuss further these questions of mutual concern. Ambassador Finletter will be in touch with you to work out precise dates for your visit. Meanwhile, warm greetings for the New Year. With warm regards, Sincerely,  
Dean Rusk.

UNQUOTE

RUSK